

Introducing William Warwick
DETECTIVE CONSTABLE

Jeffrey Archer

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NOTHING VENTURED

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CHRONICLES



*This is not a detective story,
this is a story about a detective*

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14 July 1979

‘YOU CAN’T BE serious.’

‘I couldn’t be more serious, Father, as you’d realize if you’d ever listened to anything I’ve been saying for the past ten years.’

‘But you’ve been offered a place at my old college at Oxford to read law, and after you graduate, you’ll be able to join me in chambers. What more could a young man ask for?’

‘To be allowed to pursue a career of his own choosing, and not just be expected to follow in his father’s footsteps.’

‘Would that be such a bad thing? After all, I’ve enjoyed a fascinating and worthwhile career, and, dare I suggest, been moderately successful.’

‘Brilliantly successful, Father, but it isn’t your career we’re discussing, it’s mine. And perhaps I don’t want to be a leading criminal barrister who spends his whole life defending a bunch of villains he’d never consider inviting to lunch at his club.’

‘You seem to have forgotten that those same villains

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paid for your education, and the lifestyle you presently enjoy.'

'I'm never allowed to forget it, Father, which is the reason I intend to spend my life making sure those same villains are locked up for long periods of time, and not allowed to go free and continue a life of crime thanks to your skilful advocacy.'

William thought he'd finally silenced his father, but he was wrong.

'Perhaps we could agree on a compromise, dear boy?'

'Not a chance, Father,' said William firmly. 'You're sounding like a barrister who's pleading for a reduced sentence, when he knows he's defending a weak case. But for once, your eloquent words are falling on deaf ears.'

'Won't you even allow me to put my case before you dismiss it out of hand?' responded his father.

'No, because I'm not guilty, and I don't have to prove to a jury that I'm innocent, just to please you.'

'But would you be willing to do something to please me, my dear?'

In the heat of battle William had quite forgotten that his mother had been sitting silently at the other end of the table, closely following the jousting between her husband and son. William was well prepared to take on his father but knew he was no match for his mother. He fell silent once again. A silence that his father took advantage of.

'What do you have in mind, m'lud?' said Sir Julian, tugging at the lapels of his jacket, and addressing his wife as if she were a high court judge.

'William will be allowed to go to the university of his choice,' said Marjorie, 'select the subject he wishes to

study, and once he's graduated, follow the career he wants to pursue. And more important, when he does, you will give in gracefully and never raise the subject again.'

'I confess,' said Sir Julian, 'that while accepting your wise judgement, I might find the last part difficult.'

Mother and son burst out laughing.

'Am I allowed a plea in mitigation?' asked Sir Julian innocently.

'No,' said William, 'because I will only agree to Mother's terms if in three years' time you unreservedly support my decision to join the Metropolitan Police Force.'

Sir Julian Warwick QC rose from his place at the head of the table, gave his wife a slight bow, and reluctantly said, 'If it so please Your Lordship.'



William Warwick had wanted to be a detective from the age of eight, when he'd solved 'the case of the missing Mars bars'. It was a simple paper trail, he explained to his housemaster, that didn't require a magnifying glass.

The evidence – sweet papers – had been found in the waste-paper basket of the guilty party's study, and the culprit wasn't able to prove he'd spent any of his pocket money in the tuck shop that term.

And what made it worse for William was that Adrian Heath was one of his closest pals, and he'd assumed it would be a lifelong friendship. When he discussed it with his father at half term, the old man said, 'We must hope that Adrian has learnt from the experience, otherwise who knows what will become of the boy.'

Despite William being mocked by his fellow pupils, who dreamt of becoming doctors, lawyers, teachers, even

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accountants, the careers master showed no surprise when William informed him that he was going to be a detective. After all, the other boys had nicknamed him Sherlock before the end of his first term.

William's father, Sir Julian Warwick Bt, had wanted his son to go up to Oxford and read law, just as he'd done thirty years before. But despite his father's best efforts, William had remained determined to join the police force the day he left school. The two stubborn men finally reached a compromise approved of by his mother. William would go to London University and read art history – a subject his father refused to take seriously – and if, after three years, his son still wanted to be a policeman, Sir Julian agreed to give in gracefully. William knew that would never happen.

William enjoyed every moment of his three years at King's College London, where he fell in love several times. First with Hannah and Rembrandt, followed by Judy and Turner, and finally Rachel and Hockney, before settling down with Caravaggio: an affair that would last a lifetime, even though his father had pointed out that the great Italian artist had been a murderer and should have been hanged. A good enough reason to abolish the death penalty, William suggested. Once again, father and son didn't agree.

During the summer holidays after he'd left school, William backpacked his way across Europe to Rome, Paris, Berlin and on to St Petersburg, to join long queues of other devotees who wished to worship the past masters. When he finally graduated, his professor suggested that he should consider a PhD on the darker side of Caravaggio. The darker side, replied William, was exactly what he intended to research, but he wanted to learn

more about criminals in the twentieth century, rather than the sixteenth.



At five minutes to three on the afternoon of Sunday, 5 September 1982, William reported to Hendon Police College in north London. He enjoyed almost every minute of the training course from the moment he swore allegiance to the Queen to his passing-out parade sixteen weeks later.

The following day, he was issued with a navy-blue serge uniform, helmet and truncheon, and couldn't resist glancing at his reflection whenever he passed a window. A police uniform, he was warned by the commander on his first day on parade, could change a person's personality, and not always for the better.

Lessons at Hendon had begun on the second day and were divided between the classroom and the gym. William learnt whole sections of the law until he could repeat them verbatim. He revelled in forensic and crime scene analysis, even though he quickly discovered when he was introduced to the skid pad that his driving skills were fairly rudimentary.

Having endured years of cut and thrust with his father across the breakfast table, William felt at ease in the mock courtroom, where instructing officers cross-examined him in the witness box, and he even held his own during self-defence classes, where he learnt how to disarm, handcuff and restrain someone who was far bigger than him. He was also taught about a constable's powers of arrest, search and entry, the use of reasonable force and, most important of all, discretion. 'Don't always stick to the rule book,' his instructor advised him. 'Sometimes

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you have to use common sense, which, when you're dealing with the public, you'll find isn't that common.'

Exams were as regular as clockwork, compared to his days at university, and he wasn't surprised that several candidates fell by the wayside before the course had ended.

After what felt like an interminable two-week break following his passing-out parade, William finally received a letter instructing him to report to Lambeth police station at 8 a.m. the following Monday. An area of London he had never visited before.



Police Constable 565LD had joined the Metropolitan Police Force as a graduate but decided not to take advantage of the accelerated promotion scheme that would have allowed him to progress more quickly up the ladder, as he wanted to line up on his first day with every other new recruit on equal terms. He accepted that, as a probationer, he would have to spend at least two years on the beat before he could hope to become a detective, and in truth, he couldn't wait to be thrown in at the deep end.

From his first day as a probationer William was guided by his mentor, Constable Fred Yates, who had twenty-eight years of police service under his belt, and had been told by the nick's chief inspector to 'look after the boy'. The two men had little in common other than that they'd both wanted to be coppers from an early age, and their fathers had done everything in their power to prevent them pursuing their chosen career.

'ABC,' was the first thing Fred said when he was introduced to the wet-behind-the-ears young sprog. He didn't wait for William to ask.

JEFFREY ARCHER

‘Accept nothing, Believe no one, Challenge everything. It’s the only law I live by.’

During the next few months, Fred introduced William to the world of burglars, drug dealers and pimps, as well as his first dead body. With the zeal of Sir Galahad, William wanted to lock up every offender and make the world a better place; Fred was more realistic, but he never once attempted to douse the flames of William’s youthful enthusiasm. The young probationer quickly found out that the public don’t know if a policeman has been in uniform for a couple of days or a couple of years.

‘Time to stop your first car,’ said Fred on William’s second day on the beat, coming to a halt by a set of traffic lights. ‘We’ll hang about until someone runs a red, and then you can step out into the road and flag them down.’ William looked apprehensive. ‘Leave the rest to me. See that tree about a hundred yards away? Go and hide behind it, and wait until I give you the signal.’

William could hear his heart pounding as he stood behind the tree. He didn’t have long to wait before Fred raised a hand and shouted, ‘The blue Hillman! Grab him!’

William stepped out into the road, put his arm up and directed the car to pull over to the kerb.

‘Say nothing,’ said Fred as he joined the raw recruit. ‘Watch carefully and take note.’ They both walked up to the car as the driver wound down his window.

‘Good morning, sir,’ said Fred. ‘Are you aware that you drove through a red light?’

The driver nodded but didn’t speak.

‘Could I see your driving licence?’

The driver opened his glove box, extracted his licence and handed it to Fred. After studying the document for

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a few moments, Fred said, 'It's particularly dangerous at this time in the morning, sir, as there are two schools nearby.'

'I'm sorry,' said the driver. 'It won't happen again.'

Fred handed him back his licence. 'It will just be a warning this time,' he said, while William wrote down the car's number plate in his notebook. 'But perhaps you could be a little more careful in future, sir.'

'Thank you, officer,' said the driver.

'Why just a caution,' asked William as the car drove slowly away, 'when you could have booked him?'

'Attitude,' said Fred. 'The gentleman was polite, acknowledged his mistake and apologized. Why piss off a normally law-abiding member of the public?'

'So what would have made you book him?'

'If he'd said, "Haven't you got anything better to do, officer?" Or worse, "Shouldn't you be chasing some real criminals?" Or my favourite, "Don't you realize I pay your wages?" Any of those and I would have booked him without hesitation. Mind you, there was one blighter I had to cart off to the station and lock up for a couple of hours.'

'Did he get violent?'

'No, far worse. Told me he was a close friend of the commissioner, and I'd be hearing from him. So I told him he could phone him from the station.' William burst out laughing. 'Right,' said Fred, 'get back behind the tree. Next time you can conduct the interview and I'll observe.'



Sir Julian Warwick QC sat at one end of the table, his head buried in the *Daily Telegraph*. He muttered the occasional tut-tut, while his wife, seated at the other end,

continued her daily battle with the *Times* crossword. On a good day, Marjorie would have filled in the final clue before her husband rose from the table to leave for Lincoln's Inn. On a bad day, she would have to seek his advice, a service for which he usually charged a hundred pounds an hour. He regularly reminded her that to date, she owed him over £20,000. Ten across and four down were holding her up.

Sir Julian had reached the leaders by the time his wife was wrestling with the final clue. He still wasn't convinced that the death penalty should have been abolished, particularly when a police officer or a public servant was the victim, but then neither was the *Telegraph*. He turned to the back page to find out how Blackheath rugby club had fared against Richmond in their annual derby. After reading the match report he abandoned the sports pages, as he considered the paper gave far too much coverage to soccer. Yet another sign that the nation was going to the dogs.

'Delightful picture of Charles and Diana in *The Times*,' said Marjorie.

'It will never last,' said Julian as he rose from his place and walked to the other end of the table and, as he did every morning, kissed his wife on the forehead. They exchanged newspapers, so he could study the law reports on the train journey to London.

'Don't forget the children are coming down for lunch on Sunday,' Marjorie reminded him.

'Has William passed his detective's exam yet?' he asked.

'As you well know, my dear, he isn't allowed to take the exam until he's completed two years on the beat, which won't be for at least another six months.'

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‘If he’d listened to me, he would have been a qualified barrister by now.’

‘And if you’d listened to him, you’d know he’s far more interested in locking up criminals than finding ways of getting them off.’

‘I haven’t given up yet,’ said Sir Julian.

‘Just be thankful that at least our daughter has followed in your footsteps.’

‘Grace has done nothing of the sort,’ snorted Sir Julian. ‘That girl will defend any penniless no-hoper she comes across.’

‘She has a heart of gold.’

‘Then she takes after you,’ said Sir Julian, studying the one clue his wife had failed to fill in: *Slender private man who ended up with a baton*. Four.

‘Field Marshal SLIM,’ said Sir Julian triumphantly. ‘The only man to join the army as a private soldier and end up as a field marshal.’

‘Sounds like William,’ said Marjorie. But not until the door had closed.